

South Carolina

Hello, Austria, and welcome to another installment of About the United States!

I'm John D'Amicantonio, Information Resource Officer at Embassy Vienna and it's my pleasure to tell you about my home state: South Carolina!

Located along the southeast coast of the United States, South Carolina is home to 4 and three quarter million people.

One of the original 13 colonies to become a state in the union, South Carolina has a long, rich history.

Did you know more Revolutionary war battles were fought in South Carolina than in any other place in the US?

In the colonial and post-revolutionary days, rice and indigo were the main crops for years allowing for a strong, well developed agricultural economy. With the invention of the cotton gin, South Carolina became a major cotton growing state giving way to huge plantations all over the countryside. Many of these plantations are preserved today and they draw thousands of visitors each and every year.

On a darker side of the state's history, South Carolina became the first state to secede from the Union in 1860. It was also the site of the first battle of the Civil War when Confederate troops fired on Fort Sumter just off the coast of Charleston, one of South Carolina's most historic cities.

Columbia, South Carolina's capital is located in the central part of the state while it's most famous city, Charleston, is located on the east coast.

Charleston, named for King Charles II of England, is now home to the Charles River Bridge Run, the Spoleto Performing Arts Festival and the Festival of Houses and Gardens.

Bull Island, Kiawah Island and Seabrook Island are just three of South Carolina's most beautiful and undisturbed locations open to visitors from all over the world.

Although Bull Island was famous as a hideout for pirates in the 1700s today it remains a wildlife preserve with over 62,000 acres. Day visitors can take a ferry to Bull Island and spend the day on one of the many secluded beaches or hiking through the park.

Kiawah Island offers 21 miles of golf courses while Seabrook Island offers over two thousand acres of untouched forest.

And where there's islands there's water and where there's water there's beaches! South Carolina has some of the US' most renowned beaches along the Atlantic coast. Folly Beach

and Myrtle Beach offer some of the best surfing and swimming in the US while Hilton Head has some of the best tennis clubs and courts in the world.

For people who prefer mountains, the Sassafras Mountains, part of the Blue Ridge Mountain Range, in the northern part of the state offer beautiful views and camping.

South Carolina has several outstanding colleges and universities including Clemson, the University of South Carolina and the College of Charleston.

A number of famous entertainers, authors and political figures come from South Carolina. They include:

Andrew Jackson – 7th president of the United States, a frontier general, Indian fighter and a champion of democracy.

Chris Rock – actor and comedian

Josh Turner – Country singer

Vanna White – TV personality

Mary McLeod Bethune – African American Civil rights leader in the mid-20th Century; daughter of former slaves is also from SC;

Pat Conroy wrote several books based on his experience living in South Carolina. Titles such as The Great Santini, Lords of Discipline and Conrack were also made into movies set in South Carolina.

Chubby Checker, famous for the twist, was also born in South Carolina.

And the greatest jazz trumpeter of all times, Dizzy Gillespie is a South Carolinian.

Today one of South Carolina's most famous residents is Roland Zimmer, Austria's current honorary consul to North and South Carolina. Mr. Zimmer is the owner and president of the Zimmer America Corporation, an offshoot of the Zimmer Machinery Corporation in Austria. Roland moved to South Carolina from Carinthia, Austria in 1984. The businessman has spent most of his life promoting the relationship between Austria and South Carolina.

Our current governor, Nikki Haley, is both female and the daughter of immigrants from India. She is also the youngest governor in the US at this time.

I hope you enjoyed learning about South Carolina and I want to invite all of you to visit my state: South Carolina!